

# 2002 The Year In Review



**I**n 2002, there were significant developments in case management, technology, training, and resource acquisition—to name a few areas. The Administrative Office also developed and implemented emergency plans and security enhancements in fiscal year 2002. The goal is to make certain that core court functions can and will continue under virtually any circumstances.

Support for the Judicial Conference and its committees continued to be a major focus of

Administrative Office activities. Communications with Congress were frequent and focused, and support for key court programs was strengthened and broadened. As courts tackled increased workloads, the Administrative Office took significant steps to assist judges and court employees in providing superior service to the public while making the best use of taxpayer dollars.

This report discusses a wide range of Administrative Office activities in 2002.

## *Security Priorities Funded*

Following 9-11, Congress responded favorably to the Judiciary's immediate security funding needs, creating 106 new supervisory-level deputy marshal/court security inspector positions. These inspectors, who will focus exclusively on court security, will assist district marshals and chief deputy marshals in improving the effective and efficient provision of security for the courts. They also will serve as the locus of communication on court security for the district court or court of appeals. Creation of these positions fulfills one of the proposals from the comprehensive court security study commissioned by the Administrative Office and completed in 2001.

Emergency funds also are being used to

- Hire an additional 358 temporary court security officers and pay for overtime nationwide.
- Purchase emergency communications equipment.
- Acquire new X-ray machines for court entrances, loading docks, and mail rooms.
- Enhance mail-handling facilities and procedures.
- Accelerate the court security officer radio upgrade program.
- Enhance court perimeter security.



# Post 9-11: Preparing for the Unexpected

## Emergency Preparedness

The Administrative Office formally organized the Judiciary Emergency Preparedness Office in fiscal year 2002 to give guidance and other assistance to courts for emergency preparedness, crisis response, and continuity of operations plans. Such plans focus on the safety of Judiciary employees and the public, and ensure that essential functions and activities are not interrupted unnecessarily and that normal functions resume as quickly and safely as possible. During the past year, nearly 2,000 members of the Judiciary have received briefings on the emergency preparedness program.

In May 2002, the Administrative Office awarded a contract to develop a template for a continuity of operations plan (COOP) for courts to use as they develop individual plans. The contractor focused on plans for courts in New York City, since they had direct experience dealing with the effects of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. From these plans, the contractor developed draft templates, which court staff reviewed. Representatives from circuit executives' offices and other court offices met in Washington, D.C. to exchange information on a first draft of a COOP template and to talk about what courts need to consider in creating their own local plan. The final template was distributed to the courts in November 2002. It should help each court identify vulnerabilities in the event of a crisis, do the advance planning necessary to maintain normal operations, and conduct the extensive coordination required among organizations. Courts can access templates and checklists about emergency preparedness on the J-Net.

## Safe Mail Handling

Following the tragic incidents of anthrax-contaminated mail in fall

2001, the Administrative Office contracted to study several existing courthouse mail facilities and handling practices and to help develop procedures and infrastructure for safe mail handling in federal courthouses. In July 2002, the Judicial Conference, by mail ballot, endorsed the recommendations of the contractor regarding safe mail handling procedures and the construction of centralized mail rooms in courthouses, using \$12 million from an emergency security supplemental appropriation. Administrative Office staff developed guidelines and prototype mail rooms based on the size of the courthouse and the potential volume of mail.

Additionally, in response to anthrax contamination concerns, the Administrative Office began sending nearly all correspondence to the courts by e-mail or facsimile transmission.

## Offsite Center

The conference report accompanying the first Fiscal Year 2002 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act directed the Judiciary to consider establishing a court operations support center located outside Washington, D.C. An independent contractor studied this issue and recommended the establishment of a small, offsite center that would provide a more secure location for housing computer and telecommunications systems and personnel necessary to support essential court functions.